

**VA****U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs**

# **News Release**

Office of Public Affairs  
Media RelationsWashington, DC 20420  
(202) 461-7600  
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August 20, 1998

*Washington, D.C.* -- The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is assisting France in its effort to bestow the National Order of the Legion of Honor -- that country's highest honor -- to surviving members of the U.S. armed forces who fought on French soil during World War I.

"We will use all our available means to assist French President Jacques Chirac in identifying and notifying those American World War I veterans eligible for this honor," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Togo D. West, Jr. Secretary West recently sent a letter and an application for the medal to each of the approximately 900 World War I veterans receiving VA benefits.

There are an estimated 3,200 living U.S. World War I veterans, half of whom are believed to have served in France during the war. The Legion of Honor will not be given posthumously to U.S. veterans.

President Chirac instituted the campaign to honor the remaining survivors of the allied forces who served in France in conjunction with the commemoration of the 80th anniversary of the World War I armistice on November 11, 1998.

Applications must be sent by veterans or their representatives directly to the French Embassy in Washington. While VA will assist the French Embassy in verifying and authenticating veterans' records of service, the French government will make final determinations on the awarding of the Legion of Honor.

## **Other Links**

Additional information on event and application for recognition. [VA Veterans Day 1998 Web Site](#)